

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1 to 23 (Cancelled)

24. (New) A method of setting configuration variables for a device, including steps of:

determining a list of sources for the configuration variables, the sources including local sources and remote sources;

accessing each source in turn, and for each source, performing steps including:
reading variable names and values from the source, the variable names
and values possibly including a name of the list of sources and a
value for the list of sources;

if a variable name is new, assigning a value to that name; and

if a variable name is not new, replacing or appending a value to an
existing value assigned to that name; and

if the value for the list of sources has changed, repeating the accessing step and
reading, assigning, and replacing or appending steps.

25. (New) A method as in claim 24, wherein the sources are accessed in turn based on a sequence of those sources in the list, whereby sources later in the list replace or append to the values from sources earlier in the list.

26. (New) A method as in claim 24, wherein the sources for the configuration variables are files.

27. (New) A method as in claim 26, wherein the list of sources includes at least one file having configuration variables for a group of devices including the device.

28. (New) A method as in claim 24, further including steps of, after accessing one of the sources, determining if that source has been updated since a last configuration, and skipping the reading, assigning, and replacing or appending steps for that source if that source has not been updated.

29. (New) A method as in claim 24, wherein whether to replace or to append a value to an existing value is responsive to a syntax of the variable names and values.

30. (New) A method as in claim 24, further including steps of storing the variable names and values in a configuration file after all sources in the list of sources have been accessed.

31. (New) A device including:

a processor;

a network interface; and

program and data memory storing instructions executable by the processor to control communication with local and remote devices over the network interface and to set configuration variables for the device, the instructions including steps of:

determining a list of sources for the configuration variables, the sources including local sources and remote sources;

accessing each source in turn, and for each source, performing steps including:

reading variable names and values from the source, the variable names and values possibly including a name of the list of sources and a value for the list of sources;

if a variable name is new, assigning a value to that name; and

if a variable name is not new, replacing or appending a value to an existing value assigned to that name; and

if the value for the list of sources has changed, repeating the accessing step and reading, assigning, and replacing or appending steps.

32. (New) A device as in claim 31, further comprising mass storage, wherein the instructions are further executable by the processor to control the mass storage.

33. (New) A device as in claim 31, wherein the sources are accessed in turn based on a sequence of those sources in the list, whereby sources later in the list replace or append to the values from sources earlier in the list.

34. (New) A device as in claim 31, wherein the sources for the configuration variables are files.

35. (New) A device as in claim 34, wherein the list of sources includes at least one file having configuration variables for a group of devices including the device.

36. (New) A device as in claim 31, wherein the instructions further include steps of, after accessing one of the sources, determining if that source has been updated since a last configuration, and skipping the reading, assigning, and replacing or appending steps for that source if that source has not been updated.

37. (New) A device as in claim 31, wherein whether to replace or to append a value to an existing value is responsive to a syntax of the variable names and values.

38. (New) A device as in claim 31, wherein the instructions further include steps of storing the variable names and values in a configuration file after all sources in the list of sources have been accessed.